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FOR DS/IP/ITA AND DS/IP/EUR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1.5 (C)
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [MK](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: SECURITY ENVIRONMENT PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE (SEPQ)
FOR SKOPJE - SPRING 2009

REF: STATE 13023

Classified By: RSO Bart Brown for reason 1.5 (C)

(SBU) The following is Post's response to the SEPQ.
Responses are keyed off of reftel.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

[1](#)1. (SBU) DEMONSTRATIONS

[1](#)A. There is a small ethnic Serbian population in Macedonia capable of carrying out anti-American demonstrations.

i. There have been no anti-American demonstrations in the country within the last 12 months.

ii. There have been no anti-American demonstrations near or in front of the U.S. diplomatic facilities in the last 12 months.

iii. The average size of previous anti-American demonstrations is approximately 25-50.

iv. One anti-American demonstration on July 28, 2006, was based on U.S. support for Israel. In the past (late 1990's and in 2001) larger scale demonstrations were triggered by U.S. military actions and foreign policy initiatives.

[1](#)B. Demonstrations are generally peaceful in nature.

i. There have been no violent demonstrations which resulted in damage to USG facilities or personnel within recent years.

ii. The perimeter was penetrated during demonstrations in March 1999 and July 2001. Since 2001, Chancery security has been enhanced by the addition of perimeter security upgrades, including new walls. There have been no similar demonstrations since 2001.

[1](#)C. There have been sporadic, small anti-government demonstrations against the GOM throughout the past twelve months.

i. Most anti-government demonstrations have occurred around or in front of GOM official buildings, approximately one mile from the Chancery compound.

ii. The average size of an anti-government demonstration is between 200 and 500, but on a few occasions (none in the past year) there have been demonstrations as large as 15,000 to 20,000.

iii. In general protests are peaceful. There have been a few isolated cases of violence during anti-government protests. Early this year in the city center of Skopje some protesters turned violent and clashed with police in front of the

government building.

iv. No damage has occurred to USG properties in the past 12 months as a result of demonstrations.

12. (SBU) MACRO CONFLICT CONDITIONS

1A. Macedonia is not engaged in any armed conflicts.

1B. There is no intrastate conflict and/or insurgency currently in Macedonia.

1C. N-A

1D. N-A

13. (S/NF) HOST COUNTRY CAPABILITIES

1A. Law enforcement agencies are not as professional or well trained as they need to be, but they are slowly improving. Currently, Macedonian law enforcement agencies are working to meet international standards through internal reforms and training/assistance from the U.S. and other Western countries.

1B. The Macedonian police have received, and continue to receive, training from the USG through DS ATA, ILEA, ICITAP, EXBS and other similar programs. The training has been generally well received, but overall performance and effectiveness of the police is hampered by inadequate material support, corruption, inefficiency, and over-centralization. The police have yet to implement the "train the trainer" concept in order to maximize the knowledge gained from various U.S. sponsored training.

1C. Law enforcement agencies are confronted with widespread corruption inside most agencies. This includes hiring and firing based on political patronage. Graft and bribery are reportedly commonplace, though the GOM has taken measures to reduce such opportunities, in part with U.S. assistance.

1D. GOM Intelligence Services are capable of deterring terrorist actions. The Directorate of Security and Counterintelligence (UBK) is professional and competent, but remains politicized. In the event of ethnic strife, response would likely be energetic but hampered by professional shortcomings.

1E. GOM Intelligence Services have been very cooperative with Embassy requests for information and support.

1F. Government of Macedonia (GOM) security services have been successful on an operational level (i.e. infiltration and intelligence gathering), and to a limited degree on a tactical level. These successes continue to be against both international terrorist targets and indigenous persons of interest. There is a steady stream of reporting on transient threats, but no major threat information. The northern border region (Kosovo) continues to be a problematic area for the GOM, with violent and criminal individuals and groups operating in this area.

1G. Host government has been responsive to embassy regarding requests for information.

1H. Overall security for the main airport in Skopje and the secondary airport in Ohrid is rated as Average to Poor. The lack of training and proper equipment limit airport authorities professional capabilities in relation to security. A high level of corruption throughout the police services to include airport police detract from their ability to provide effective and sound enforcement of rule of law.

1I. Customs and immigration controls are generally ineffective but are improving with USG assistance and training. Although the U.S. Government is providing training and support to develop Macedonian customs and immigration controls they have a great deal to improve upon. Remote and porous borders with Albania and Kosovo in combination with corruption and poorly

funded and equipped customs and immigration officers make it very difficult for host government to enforce border security and effective customs controls.

¶J. Border patrol forces are ineffective due to lack of personnel, training, equipment and issues with corruption. The border police are improving and have been deploying automated systems (computer systems) at all entry points.

INDIGENOUS TERRORISM

¶4. (SBU) ANTI-AMERICAN TERRORIST GROUPS

¶A. There are no indigenous anti-American terrorist groups in Macedonia.

¶B. N-A

¶C. N-A

¶D. N-A

¶E. N-A

¶F. N-A

¶G. N-A

¶5. (SBU) OTHER INDIGENOUS TERRORIST GROUPS

¶A. There are no other organized indigenous terrorist groups in Macedonia; however, there are loosely-connected individuals who have carried out activities consistent with terrorism in the last year. These groups have been referred to as extremists, criminal organizations/gangs and terrorists. On various occasions they challenge host government security forces to achieve their objectives or goals.

¶B. One such group recently conducted an ambush on a three person patrol from a special police unit (Alphas) in downtown Skopje. One officer was fatally wounded and the two others survived with serious injuries. On a similar note another group carried out an attack in early 2008 in the central Skopje region against members of the Tigers, an elite police unit. This attack resulted in the death of one police officer. These groups continue to demonstrate their desire and ability to challenge the rule of law and carry out violent actions against host government police forces.

¶C. No.

¶D. No.

TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

¶6. (S/NF) TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST INDICATORS

¶A. No, see 6D.

¶B. N-A

¶C. No.

¶D. There is no evidence of traditional transnational terrorist groups in Macedonia. There are NGOs in Macedonia and the region which provide support to individuals who are in, or sympathetic to some terrorist groups. These NGOs include Al-Haramein, Al-Waqf Al-Islami, Bamiresia, and others. Macedonia is also a known transit route into the Balkans and Europe for identified extremists.

¶E. Most members of Macedonia's Islamic community are pro-American. However, the community includes factions

sympathetic to terrorist groups. The Embassy enjoys good relations with the Islamic community in Macedonia.

¶F. Serbian and Russian intelligence are present in Macedonia and could try to use their influence to instigate inflammatory reactions to Macedonia's recognition of Kosovo independence, such as violent demonstrations.

¶G. A wide variety of weapons and explosives is readily available both in Macedonia and in surrounding countries for use by terrorist or criminal elements. Police routinely find dated weapons caches around the country, mostly from the hostilities in 1999 and 2001. Post assesses that various weapon systems and explosives are locally available.

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